NEW BOOKS.

A Conscientious Pair.

An earnest story involving certain interesting questions of conscience will be found in Una L. Silberrad's "Curayl" (Doubleday, Page & Co.). It appears in the beginning that Anthony Luttrell had strong and clear convictions in regard to conduct and its consequences. His sermon in the old and out of the way church at Curayl had a powerful effect upon everybody who heard it. From his text, "Thou, Lord, art merciful; Thou rewardest every man according to his works," he preached that mercy meant justice, and that the reaping was to be exactly what had been sown.

Beatrice Curayl, the most distinguished member of the congregation, was so impressed by what Luttrell said that she did a remarkable thing. The preacher was a stranger to her; he had never been in Curayl before. Meeting him in the churchyard after the service, she asked him if a woman who had married for money and repented ought to abide by the bargain. He replied that he thought she should. "One has usually to abide by one's bargains," he said. "It is not gentlemanly for either party to cry off. We can't exactly do it. We don't all of us find a place for repentance. One can't weep over such affairs in public and daren't think over them in private; there is nothing for it but to laugh and go on. It is no use to make bad worse by adding broken promises to broken hearts."

There was one bit of this advice that Beatrice Curayl was not constituted to follow. As the reader goes on with the story he will understand how unlikely it was that she should laugh. The less likely, perhaps, because of something that Luttrell added. He said: "The wedding ring is of little importance in such cases. The man buys the woman he wants for the price which will purchase her. The spirit is much the same whether there is a ring in the bargain or not." Of course Beatrice had been stating her own case. Her interlocutor must have known as much. It says: "He spoke with studied indifference, but the figure beneath the yews recoiled as if under a blow. He felt as if he had given one, as if he had struck a woman in the face; he was heartily ashamed of himself." But Beatrice, though she recoiled, was of too ancient a lineage to be meek. She "recovered herself and half remembered that she was a Curayl. 'How dare you!' she said."

The story goes on to show in detail the price that Beatrice paid for marrying for money. She had hoped to restore the perishing estate of Curayl. Now her husband would give her nothing for this purpose. She might have all the luxuries of London, but he considered Curayl to be decayed beyond hope, and it must shift for itself. Unable to obtain money for the rehabilitation of Curyal, Beatrice devoted to it her personal energies and ministrations. Fever broke out at the Waterside, its most impoverished quarter. She went to the Waterside as nurse. Luthrell was there before her. He had cared for Caser, a roving and rough character, who had brought the fever from abroad and had died of it. The dying Caser had given to the preacher a miniature set with diamonds and rubies, and had expired while trying to tell what was to be done with it.

The fever at the Waterside was the typhus. It raged for weeks. Luttrell cremated the bodies. He and Beatrice dwelt in the same cottage. He was not really a minister. For a fairly plausible reason he had masqueraded as one when he preached the remarkable sermon in the church at Curayl. He continued to pass for one during the run of the fever at the Waterside. He held services and preached when the cremations were effected. When the fever was over he made confession to Beatrice. He advised her to go to her husband. This though he loved her and though he knew that she loved him.

Her husband treated her with coarseness and violence in the ancient house at Curayl. The next day in London he was thrown from a cab and killed. The law gave all his vast wealth to his widow. She refused to receive it. She became a professional nurse. An illegitimate Curayl appeared and pestered her. He wanted money. He wanted a certain valuable heirloom. She had neither, and he was outrageous. While he was being outrageous Luttrell came in through the window. He had been to South Africa looking for an heir to the diamond and ruby studded miniature confided to him by the dying Caser. It then transpired that the miniature belonged to Beatrice.

Luttrell, rich to begin with, had recently become richer. While he was away in Africa he had inherited coal mines and iron manufactories. There is absolutely no reason why a woman should not marry a rich man if she loves him. The admirable conscience of Beatrice permitted her to see this. A readable story, a little queer in places. We wish the author would reform her cruel and therefore surprising habit of splitting the infinitive.

Again the Story of English Country Life.

Katherine Tynan's story of "Dick Pentreath" is a placid chronicle of English country life—not the actual country life, but the "composition" that one sees in lithographs and engravings wherewith the English people themselves are given to decorating their walls. A group of young people in an exclusive county, with a simple country gentleman for a hero, are selected and the favorite English game of marrying them to each other is played to a satisfactory finish.

Most of the time is spent about the afternoon tea table eating hot tea cakes or toasted muffins. There is a little hunting, a little shooting. Dick comes a cropper by drinking too much wine at his bachelor dinner and being cast off by his fiancée marries a farmer's daughter. She goes quite mad, and after Dick's hair has becomingly whitened she obligingly dies and leaves him to wed his first love, who has waited for him The others pair off according to their fancy, and everbody goes on drinking tea and eating tea cakes with that persistent disregard for consequences for which the English are famous.

The book is one that a girl certainly could give her aunt or a boy present unblushingly to his grandmother.

But it is simple in style and really English in sentiment and atmosphere. It is published by A. C. McClurg.

A Book Above the Commonplace.

Jennette Lee's "Uncle William" is too big for the story the author has written around him, but he is a good natured Gulliver, with a rare fund of homely, humorous philosophy. He talks about contentedly within the somewhat narrow limits of the conventional little plot, looking after the two lovers with the same whimsical tenderness that he bestows upon Juno's kittens when they arrive unexpectedly.

The story is the slightest sketch of romance—an aspiring but unappreciated artist, a talented musician, the usual poverty, the usual illness and the unusual rich patron, who brings about the happy ending and provides a steam yacht for the wedding journey. But Uncle William's genial, shrewd sayings give to the book a distinctive charm and interest.

This big, gentle, original philosopher, with his fascinating little house by the sea, with a mile of dooryard, is a character delightful to meet in fiction and once known one not quickly forgotten. "You learn jest about the same bein' happy as you do bein' miserable—only you learn it quicker," seems to be the keynote to Uncle Williams's philosophy. There are many things that might be quoted from his conversation, like—"That's one o' the cur'us things—how different they be, men and women. I've thought about it a good many times, how it must 'a' tickled the Lord a good deal when he found how different they turned out—made o' the same kind of stuff, so"; and, "Wimmen and the sea are alike—some ways a good deal alike. I've lived by the sea sixty year, you know, and I've watched all kinds of doings. But what I'm surest of is that it's deeper 'n we be." But the only way to really know "Uncle William" is to read Mrs. Lee's little book, whose simplicity is the distinction that sets it above the the commonplace. The book is published by the Century Company.

A Story of Australia.

"The Snare of Strength," by Randolph Bedford (Turner), is a story of strong men and strange happenings, thrown together with more force than skill. A chaos of Australian politics, the loves of fierce men, wild adventures of prospectors and miners, mad revels in drinking houses, florid descriptions of scenery and plenty of profanity enter into Mr. Bedford's scheme of a novel which lacks constructon and needs editing. It is lurid, it is unusual—but it isn't interesting.

The book is not without some grim humor and some fine passages, but they are lost in the general jumble of sensational episode and adventure. It is amusing when one silly woman without any children and with the neurotic emotions that crave a new romance every fortnight manages to involve so many of the men in questionable situations that the whole Cabinet talk of resigning their portfolios for fear of becoming co-respondents, but it isn't amusing enough to recompense the reading of the confused tale to its tragic conclusion.

If Mr. Bedford's idea of Australia is founded on fact the one thing to be thankful for is that the literature of that distant island has not yet attained the importance that demands attention.

There Are Many Books Like This One.

"Called to the Field," by Lucy Meacham Thurston (Little, Brown & Co.), is a literary confection of the pretty and sentimental style made up of the usual materials employed in tales based upon the civil war as a theme. It is told from the woman's viewpoint and occupied with the woman's contribution of sacrifice and suffering in the days of the great conflict. It is a pretty chronicle, in which all the men are noble and heroic, all the women fair and brave, all the darkies faithful and devoted.

A gallant young husband is called away from his peaceful home and pretty wife by the exigencies of war, and after a due amount of discomfort escapes from prison and returns to find the inevitable baby awaiting him.

There is nothing distinguished or distinctive in the tale or its treatment, and no more reason why it should have been printed than why it should not have been written. It is gentle and innocuous, and would not be harmful to the young person if the young person could be persuaded to read it.

Sailing Craft.

The story of small sailing vessels that Mr. H. Warington Smyth has compiled in "Mast and Sail in Europe and Asia" (E. P. Dutton & Co.) was well worth telling. It is a curiously uneven book. There is a good deal of fine writing at the start, which drops away as the author gets to work. He takes the fishing craft and smaller vessels of each nation, beginning with Scandinavia and the Dutch, then following the British coast in great detail. After France and Portugal, he enters the Mediterranean. So far the reader will find as much interest in the many curious cuts of vessels as in the verbal description.

With the Asiatic craft the style changes again. Here the author has stories to tell of personal adventure, of storms and other perils, for he spent many years in Siam. He seems to have sailed every curiosity that there is on the waters. His estimation of Siamese sailors and of Chinese junks is high. At the end is a useful glossary that includes the countless queer boats that are described.

Clear Eyes in the Philippines.

It is a great pleasure to come across a book that tells observed facts about the Philippines. Most of the recent visitors to the islands have had in mind when telling their stories either the feelings of their auditors at home or their own established Occidental standards of conduct. They have provided generally comparisons odious to the Filipino, and statistics which may be made to prove anything.

In "The Philippine Experiences of an American Teacher," by Mr. William B. Freer (Charles Scribner's Sons), we have a remarkable piece of work. We have rarely come across a book that is more objective. The author, who spent three years in the islands as a teacher, describes the people as he saw them, with no standard of right or wrong, save the relation to the work he was appointed to do. He went out of his way to become acquainted with the people and their ways of thinking, and he seems to have really succeeded in knowing them.

The result is a description of the Filipino, his faults, his good qualities, his way of thinking, his ambitions that must help every one who has to deal with him. It is no abstract picture, but a succession of individual portraits, of separate experiences, from each of which something may be learned. It need not be said that Mr. Freer does not believe the Filipino is ready for self-government. The book is extremely entertaining as well as instructive.

Literature.

So far as college courses in literature lead to the reading of authors, systematically or at haphazard, they probably do good. Within very limited bounds, too, and in the hands of competent instructors such matters as "comparative literature" or studies on "the rise of the novel" or the "drama in different countries" can do no harm. Where the lectures consist of expressions of opinion, however, which the student accepts with little or no reading of the author criticised, as is too often the case, or where the comparison is made the excuse for fanciful theories, which the facts may or may not back up, they are mischievous or futile. In "Literature, Its Principles and Its Problems" (Funk & Wagnalls Company) Prof. Theodore W. Hunt of Princeton University undertakes to establish that "literature" is a "science." He finds some difficulty in defining what "literature" is, and probably will find many who will not accept his definition. It is as difficult to define, if taken as anything other than a conveniently comprehensive term, as "style." If the reader will pass over the professor's abstractions and theories and will attend to his comments on various forms of writing and individual authors he may derive some profit from the book, for Dr. Hunt has read much and taught long.

Far more pleasant reading will be the second selection of "Brief Literary Criticisms," by the late Richard Holt Hutton (Macmillans). Mr. Hutton was for many years the literary critic of the London

Continued on Eighth Page.